and financial difficulties of the prospec tive buyers. The Government is seized of the position and is exploring various options.

**Global Trade Powers Dragging India dispute Settlement body of T O**

2193. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE ba pleased to state:

(a) wiiether the presen Government have overlooked "risks of international isolation in global trade arena" as reported in an article published in the Times of India, New Delhi, dated 20th July, 1997; . .

(b) whether global trade powers are trying to drag India to the dispute settlement body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO);

(c) if so, the reasons therefor indicating why India waiits to continue to maintain Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) and slowe dotwn the autonomous trade liberalisation process which began in 1991; and

(d) concrete step taken so far by Government to avoid loss of India's export markets "abroad", "credibility' and "isolation" in global trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) No. Sir.

(b) to (d) The news item referred to in the question mainly deal's with the ctHisultations held in the Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions of the World Trae Organisation (WTO) with India on the qurFititative restriction on imports maintained by India under the provisions of Article XVITI : B of the General Agreement on Traffic and Trade (GATT), 1994. The news item mentions that India risked isolation in the global trade arena by refusing to notify an! internationally acceptable time frame for eliminating barriers, and that the collapse of the talks has prompted global trade powers, including the EU, the US, Canada, Australiae New Zealand and Switzerland to initiate di'spute settlement proceedings against India.

Goverimient of India had presented to the WTO Committee on Balance of Paymente Restrictions a plan for the elimination of residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained under Article XVIII :B of the GATT. This plan wae discussed at the meeting of the Committee held on 10_1I June 1997 a'nd ae the rasumed meeting held on 30 June-1 July 1997, when due to divergence of opinion among Members of the Committee, the consultations concluded without consensus. Therefore, it may not correct to state that India was isolated during the deliberation's of this Committee.

Some of the Member that had expres sed the view that *the* time period under Iiidia's plan was too long, namly, Aust ralia, Canada, the European Commu'ni-ties. New Zealand, Switzerland and the United State of America, in separate requests, have sought formal consulta tione with India under Article XX TI of GATT 1994 and the Understa-nding ini Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of EH iputcs (DSU) alleging that continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions *dtn* imports for balance of payments purposes by India when there have be°n improvements in India's balince of payments is inconsistent with India's obligations! under the WTO. India has accepted the requests for consultations. There are indications that the complainants- would like to work towards a mutually acceptable solution. India's approach to these consultations would also bs similar.

**Imporit *of* cooee uder OGL**

2194. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to place coffee under Open General Licence import scheme;

(b) if so, reasons for increase in domestic coffee prices; and